

# Symposium on the Early Colonial Archaeology of the Delaware Valley Region to be held at Delaware's New Castle Court House Museum on May 10, 2014

On Saturday, May 10, 2014, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, in collaboration with the [Archaeological Society of Delaware](#), will present a Symposium on the Early Colonial Archaeology of the Delaware Valley Region. Now in its seventh year, the symposium is dedicated to building a regional-level dialog that can identify the uniqueness of the cultures that existed in the Delaware Valley during the early period of European colonization. A complete schedule of symposium activities is listed below.



The symposium will take place at the [New Castle Court House Museum](#) located at 211 Delaware St. in New Castle, Del.

Admission is free and open to the public. For additional information, contact Craig Lukezic at [craig.lukezic@delaware.gov](mailto:craig.lukezic@delaware.gov) or call 302-736-7407.

## Schedule of events

**9:15 a.m.**

**Introduction**—Craig Lukezic, symposium coordinator and archaeologist, Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs

**9:30 a.m.**

**Early Dutch Fortifications and the American Variants**—Craig Lukezic, Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs

During the Eighty Years War, the Dutch developed a standardized method of fortification which was effective in the Low Countries. Termed the Old Netherland Style, this streamlined and practical method was exported throughout the world. Examples of excavated fortresses in the northern Netherlands will be presented for comparison with the historical record of forts in New Netherland and New Sweden.

**10 a.m.**

**“Freeholds and Familyes”: The Social and Cultural Dimensions of English Colonization in Central Delaware**—Charles Fithian, curator of archaeology, Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs

Who were the occupants of 17th-century Delaware plantations? What were the biological, social, cultural and economic dimensions of the families and households established in the last quarter of the 17th century in central Delaware? Questions such as these are critical to developing our understanding of early Anglo-European society in this area, and for recognizing its material manifestations expressed in the archaeological record.

This presentation will discuss data derived from a series of

historical records that provide unique perspectives on the occupants of 17th-century plantations. These data suggest that during the English Period the process of colonization in what is now Kent County (and possibly Delaware in general) developed differently from that seen in the Chesapeake Bay region only a short distance away. Evidence that the men, women and children who occupied these plantations came from a variety of cultural, racial and social backgrounds will be discussed. The presentation will also show that central Delaware was part of a diverse and heterogeneous colonial society that was established in the Delaware Valley.

**10:30 a.m.**

**Personal Adornment Artifacts From Avery's Rest**—Julie Powers, University of Massachusetts

Personal adornment artifacts have often been overlooked as fascinating and intricate small finds but nothing more. Recent literature has pushed for more attention to be called to these often-telling artifacts but practical application has been light. This paper draws upon the ideas set forth by these researchers and applies them to Avery's Rest, a culturally diverse site from the 17th century in Sussex County, Del. Using artifacts from three features with intact strata and historical data, I apply these theories to show the multicultural nature of the occupants and their lifestyle at Avery's Rest, and compare and contrast between the households of John Avery and his daughter, Jemima. I argue that this site, along with colonial Sussex County, should be viewed as a hybrid site, combining influences from New England, the Chesapeake and the Delaware Valley to form a diverse settlement as reflected in the artifacts.

**11 a.m.**

**"Dutch" Assemblages Along the South River**—Bill Liebeknecht, Hunter Research, Inc.

As the Dutch were master traders with connections throughout Europe, is there really an entirely Dutch signature to look for or should we be looking for a mix of European goods dating to the 17th century? Where would those sites be located?—Close to the South River (Delaware River and Bay) so that they could intercept the few supply ships coming from Europe (no matter what flag they flew)? What do actual Dutch artifacts look like?—Examples from elsewhere in the Mid-Atlantic? ... Mainly the heart of Dutch occupation? ... New York? The second generation “Dutch” would be more inland and third generation would be more assimilated into the English population exhibiting mainly English goods. So why aren’t more of these sites known? Most avocational archaeologists and collectors to date have been more concerned with prehistoric artifacts and sites rather than historic sites. With the rise in sea level, the Delaware Bay will reclaim some of these important sites and has undoubtedly reclaimed some of these sites already.

**11:30 a.m.**

**Voices of the Past: Kort Verhael Van Zuydtrivier—The Delaware Dutch, 1630 to 1730**—Kim Rogers Burdick, resident curator, Hale-Byrnes House

The historical records of the Dutch are rich with first-hand accounts of life in 17th-century Delaware, yet the archaeological findings are, as yet, exceedingly sparse. In this paper Burdick looks at what the 17th-century Dutch settlers reported about their lives. Is the archaeological evidence scanty because we have been digging in the wrong places, not recognizing or ignoring some of the traces of the past?—Or as a Dutch colleague suggests, because the Dutch have always prided themselves on being exceedingly thrifty and would have left few traces behind?”

**Noon to 1:30**

**Lunch on your own**

**1:30 p.m.**

**Mailing a Letter From Fort Casimir (now New Castle) in 1660**—Marshall Joseph Becker, professor of anthropology emeritus, West Chester University

A review of documents referring to natives carrying mail within and among the American colonies in the 17th and 18th centuries strongly indicates that the Lenape of the lower Delaware Valley were the most reliable and trusted tribe as a single culture. The principle period of Lenape mail-carrying activity was during the Dutch period when this well-paid service provided access to desired European goods. References to mail and native carriers provide insights into the development of Dutch outpost on the Delaware River and Bay. The evidence for Lenape carriers identifies them as singular in the Northeast.

By 1664, Lenape migration into central Pennsylvania, to participate in the pelt trade, provided a more lucrative source of goods. The English domination of the colonies led to the slow development of a slowly expanding postal service. The evidence reveals that native carriers from several nations may have carried letters, most commonly during periods of conflict when their forest skills and individual abilities made these skilled runners an important, if limited, part of colonial networking.

**2 p.m.**

**Captain John Smith Chesapeake, American Indians and the Indigenous Landscape of the Upper Nanticoke River, Delaware**—Daniel R. Griffith, Griffith Archaeology Consulting; and Virginia R. Busby, Hillside Consulting, LLC

The upper Nanticoke River watershed in Delaware is significantly associated with the voyages of exploration of Captain John Smith, the Indian people of the watershed and is illustrative of the 17th-century natural environment of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. This examination is an outgrowth of a study commissioned by the Friends of the John

Smith Trail in support of the inclusion of additional trail segments to the National Park Service's Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail. The research was undertaken to answer three specific research questions regarding Captain John Smith's voyages on the Nanticoke River and the American Indian communities that lived there in June 1608. In 2012, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar approved the designation of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail's extension into Delaware to the geographic limits recommended in this report.

**2:30 p.m.**

**What Are Our Future Research Directions?**—Discussion led by Lu Ann De Cunzo, Department of Anthropology, University of Delaware

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